

# UNFREE SPACES IN THE MODERN WORLD: RESISTANT RESPONSES, EMPOWERING ACTS

An International and Interdisciplinary Workshop

19 January 2023

Altes Finanzamt/IOS Regensburg

20 January 2023

Flossenbürg Concentration Camp Memorial

21 January 2023

University of Regensburg

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## PROGRAM

**THURSDAY, 19 JAN. 2023—IOS, ALTES FINANZAMT REGENSBURG (ROOM 319)**

### **10:00-11:00am: Opening**

#### **Welcome**

UDO HEBEL (President, U of Regensburg)

ULF BRUNNBAUER (Speaker, Leibniz ScienceCampus; Academic Director, Leibniz Institute for East and Southeast European Studies)

#### **Opening Remarks & Introduction**

BIRGIT HEBEL-BAURIDL (Regensburg European American Forum, U of Regensburg)

SABINE KOLLER (Slavic Jewish Studies, U of Regensburg)

#### Bios:

Birgit Hebel-Bauridl is Managing Co-Director of the Regensburg European American Forum. She serves on the boards of directors of the Regensburg Center for International and Transnational Area Studies (CITAS) and of the Leibniz ScienceCampus "Europe and America in the Modern World." Her research focuses on transnational memory and concentration camp sites; cultural performance and embodied memory; resistant epistemologies; transnational critical regionalism; and critical whiteness studies. Her current book project investigates site-specific memory performances and embodied memory at the Flossenbürg concentration camp memorial and museum and their multi-scalar, mutually constitutive interaction with the transnational German-American region in which they are situated. She is author of *Betwixt, Between, or Beyond: Negotiating Transformations from the Liminal Sphere of Contemporary Black Performance Poetry* (2013); co-editor of *South Africa and the United States in Transnational American Studies*

(+Udo Hebel, 2014); *Approaching Transnational America in Performance* (+ Pia Wiegink, 2016); and *German-American Encounters in Bavaria and Beyond, 1945-2015* (+Ingrid Gessner, Udo Hebel, 2018).

Sabine Koller is professor of Slavic-Jewish Studies, Department of Slavic Studies, Regensburg University. She places a focus on the cultural renaissance of the Jews in Eastern Europe in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Her interdisciplinary research combines Slavic Literary and Cultural Studies, Jewish and Yiddish Studies, and Visual Cultural Studies. She is currently working on the aesthetic evolution of Yiddish modernist poets during the Soviet period using the example of Dovid Hofshateyn. She is the author of *Marc Chagall. Grenzgänge zwischen Literatur und Malerei* (Cologne / Weimar / Vienna 2012). Together with Gennady Estraiikh and Mikhail Krutikov she co-edited *Joseph Opatoshu. A Yiddish Writer Between Europe and America*, London 2013 (Studies in Yiddish; 11). Together with Efrat Gal-Ed, Natasha Gordinsky and Yfaat Weiss, she co-edited a collected volume entitled *In their Surroundings: Localizing Modern Jewish Literatures in Eastern Europe*, which just has been published (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht; Göttingen 2023).

#### **11:00am-12:30pm: Keynote Lecture**

##### **LEONA TOKER (Hebrew University of Jerusalem): “The Theme of Poetry Recital in Concentration-Camp Literature”**

###### Bio:

Leona Toker, born in Vilnius, is Professor Emerita in English Literature at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, still teaching, at the Hebrew University and at the Shalem Academic College. She is the author of *Nabokov: The Mystery of Literary Structures* (Cornell University Press, 1989), *Eloquent Reticence: Withholding Information in Fictional Narrative* (University Press of Kentucky, 1993), *Return from the Archipelago: Narratives of Gulag Survivors* (Indiana University Press, 2000), *Towards the Ethics of Form in Fiction: Narratives of Cultural Remission* (Ohio State University Press, 2010), *Gulag Literature and the Literature of Nazi Camps: An Intercontextual Reading* (Indiana University Press, 2019), and articles on English, American, and Russian writers. She has edited *Commitment in Reflections: Essays in Literature and Moral Philosophy* (Garland, 1994) and co-edited, with Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan and Shuli Barzilai, *Rereading Texts / Rethinking Critical Presuppositions: Essays in Honour of H.M. Daleski* (Peter Lang, 1996), and, with Esther Cohen, Manuela Consonni, and Otniel Dror, *Knowledge and Pain* (Rodopi, 2021). Since 2003, she is Editor of *Partial Answers: Journal of Literature and the History of Ideas*, a semiannual refereed academic periodical now published by the Johns Hopkins University Press. Her current research deals with narratological issues, the history of topoi, and Vladimir Nabokov's middle period works. At the moment, she is guest-editing a special issue on Anatoly Kuznetsov for *East European Holocaust Studies*.

###### Abstract:

Several of the intellectuals who were imprisoned in concentration camps and survived to tell the story, such as Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, Evgeniya Ginzburg, Varlam Shalamov, Primo Levi, and Jorge Semprún, give a prominent place to recollecting poetry and reciting poems by heart in the camp or prison setting. This talk outlines the paradigm of the pragmatic-to-

axiological functions of poetry in the camps, from its instrumental use as an aid to survival to its giving a shape to the life of the subject's spirit. The main focus of the talk is the theme of poetry in the works of Shalamov and Semprún, as well as the conditions that tended to erase poetry from the subject's consciousness.

Chair: SABINE KOLLER (U of Regensburg)

### 1:30-2:30pm: Panel A

#### **CARINA EHRSPEERGER (U of Regensburg): "Coping with Unfreedom in WWI Camps: Cultural Resilience through Magazines"**

##### Bio:

Carina Ehrnsperger studied English and French in the Bavarian teacher training program. She currently is a doctoral candidate in Romance studies and a program coordinator in the field of gender studies at the University of Regensburg. In her dissertation, she analyses English, French, and bilingual camp magazines published in German prisoner of war and civilian internment camps during the Great War. By focusing on the expression of culture in the camp press, she studies forms of cultural resilience. She is interested in literary and cultural studies, gender studies, area studies, captivity, and transnational cultural contact.

##### Abstract:

For the first time in history, living in the unfree spaces of camps became a reality for millions of people during World War One. Although progress has been made in the research of these camps (e.g., Hinz, Stibbe, Pöppinghege, and Bohmann), a comparative analysis of WWI camp cultures and their significance for mental health is still lacking. Prisoners and internees integrated familiar cultural elements of their pre-war experiences into the camps, such as the press, literature, theatre, or sports. By adapting them to this space of unfreedom, they created their personal strategies to cope with camp life. If these cultural responses to captivity are connected with the concept of resilience (cf. Antonovsky, Cyrulnik/Jorland), new insights can be gained, for example, into acts of resistance against the interning enemy as well as forms of (self-)empowerment. Among the rich cultural life in these unfree spaces, the camp magazines published by the camp residents themselves are of particular importance since they allowed for the expression and manifestation of shared cultural specificities in exile. Through the analysis of English and French press of camps in Berlin, Hammelburg, and Münster, it will be, therefore, argued that these media promoted resilience by reinforcing typical cultural aspects of Britain and France.

#### **JIANN-CHYNG TU (U of Regensburg / HU Berlin): "Friendship as Praxis: Shirley Graham Du Bois and Eslanda Goode Robeson's Transnational Feminist Solidarities and Alliances"**

##### Bio:

Jiann-Chyng Tu is currently lecturer and research associate (*wissenschaftlicher Mitarbeiter*) at the University of Regensburg and a doctoral candidate in North American literature and culture at Humboldt University of Berlin. He holds a B.A. in German and English from Wake Forest University and a M.A. in American Studies from HU Berlin. His research interests include 20th and 21st century American literature, food and foodways

in American literature, Black Internationalisms, Afro-Asian solidarities, and history of design.

Abstract:

According to Keisha N. Blain and Tiffany M. Gill, “scholarship on ‘Black Internationalism’ has been predominantly male-centric, emphasizing individuals such as W.E.B. Du Bois, George S. Schuyler, Paul Robeson, and C.L.R. James. With a few exceptions, Black women have been marginalized in historical narratives of black internationalism.”<sup>1</sup> Often mentioned only in tandem with their husbands or simply overlooked by historians of twentieth century Black internationalism, Eslanda Goode Robeson and Shirley Graham Du Bois are what international historian Imoabong Umoren calls “race women internationalists”<sup>2</sup>: like-minded radical Black women activist-intellectuals that traveled the world, built networks, and formed alliances in feminist, Black-led, anti-colonial, and anti-fascist organizations. Throughout their extraordinary, prolific, and unconventional lives, Goode Robeson and Graham Du Bois not only forged friendships and maintained strategic alliances with white, black, and other people of color, who served as their allies and confidants, but they also promoted and participated in global anti-racist and anti-colonial freedom struggles against multiple forms of oppressions at the intersections of class, gender, and race.<sup>3</sup> Following scholars that have challenged male-centric narrative of black internationalism and gave voice to activist-intellectuals such as Shirley Graham Du Bois and Eslanda Goode Robeson,<sup>4</sup> this talk aims to trace these radical black women’s transnational feminist alliances, friendships, and solidarities from the 1930s until the 1970s. More specifically, I will look at both Graham Du Bois and Goode Robeson’s extensive travels to and diverse writings on Africa and Asia. Zooming in on their participation in Afro-Asian networks<sup>5</sup>, their journalistic writings in various radical periodicals, as well as personal correspondences, I argue that both women used their status as “racial insiders but national outsiders”<sup>6</sup> to not only navigate spaces of un/freedom but also to maintain and forge new friendships with other “colored people of the world” through alliances and solidarities.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Keisha N. Blain and Tiffany M. Gill, *To Turn the Whole World Over: Black Women and Internationalism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2019), 3.

<sup>2</sup> Imoabong D. Umoren’s, *Race Women Internationalists: Activist-Intellectuals and Global Freedom Struggles* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2018), xv-xvi and 1-4. See also Gerald Horne, *Race Woman: The Lives of Shirley Graham Du Bois* (New York: NYU Press, 2000) and Barbara Ransby, *Eslanda: The Large and Unconventional Life of Mrs. Paul Robeson* (New Heaven: Yale UP, 2013).

<sup>3</sup> Imoabong D. Umoren, “Ideas in Action: Eslanda Robeson’s International Thought after 1945,” in *Women’s International Thought: A New History*, ed. Patricia Owens and Katharina Rietzler (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2021), 93-112.

<sup>4</sup> Some notable works, among others, include Blain and Gill, *To Turn the Whole World Over*; Keisha N. Blain, *Set the World on Fire: Black Nationalist Women and the Global Struggle for Freedom* (Philadelphia: U Penn Press, 2018); Erik S. McDuffie’s *Sojourning for Freedom: Black Women, American Communism, and the Making of Black Left Feminism* (Durham: Duke UP, 2011); Dayo Gore, *Radicalism at the Crossroads: African American Women Activists in the Cold War* (New York: NYU Press, 2011); Horne, *Race Woman*; Ransby, *Eslanda*; and Umoren, *Race Women Internationalists*.

<sup>5</sup> Networks such as, among others, the 1949 Asian Women’s Conference in Beijing (Goode Robeson), the 1958 All-Africa People’s Conference in Accra (Graham Du Bois and Goode Robeson), and the 1961 Afro-Asian Women’s Conference in Cairo (Graham Du Bois). See also: <https://afroasiannetworks.com/visualisation/>

<sup>6</sup> See Judy Tzu-Chun Wu, *Radicals on the Road: Internationalism, Orientalism, and Feminism during the Vietnam Era* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2013), 41.

<sup>7</sup> See Nico Slate, *Colored Cosmopolitanism: The Shared Struggle for Freedom in the United States and India* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2012).

Chair: MIRJA LECKE (U of Regensburg)

Bio:

Mirja Lecke is chair of the Department of Slavic Literatures and Cultures at the University of Regensburg, Germany. Her academic interests include Russian literature of the imperial and post-Soviet periods in postcolonial perspective and Polish literature of the Enlightenment and post-communist eras. She is the author of *Westland. Polen und die Ukraine in der russischen Literatur von Puškin bis Babel'* (Peter Lang, 2015), a monograph about the representation of the Western borderlands in Russian imperial literature, and with Elena Chkhaidze she co-edited *Rossia – Gruzia posle imperii* [Russia—Georgia after empire] (NLO, 2018), a volume on Russian-Georgian literary relations in the post-Soviet era. A collected volume entitled *Cosmopolitan Spaces in Odessa: A Case Study of an Urban Context*, co-edited with Efraim Sicher (Ben-Gurion University of the Negev), is forthcoming with Academic Studies Press (Boston).

**3:00-4:00pm: Panel B**

**MARIKE JANZEN (U of Kansas): “The German Literary Sphere as a space of Un/Freedom”**

Bio:

Marike Janzen is associate professor in the Department of Slavic, German, and Eurasian Studies at the University of Kansas. She earned her PhD in comparative literature from the University of Texas, Austin. Her research interests and publications focus on Anna Seghers, international solidarity, literature of human rights, Germany’s literature industry, and citizenship studies. Her first book is titled *Writing to Change the World: Anna Seghers, Authorship, and International Solidarity in the Twentieth Century* (2018, Camden House). She is currently at work on a second book, tentatively titled “Readers and Refugees as World Citizens in Germany’s Contemporary Literary Sphere,” in which she examines how state-funded literary initiatives aim to incorporate non-citizen voices into the public sphere. In summer 2023, Janzen will pursue this project in Berlin with the support of the U.S. National Endowment for the Humanities.

Abstract:

It is a commonsense notion that citizenship in modernity is a condition of freedom both on the individual and collective scale. The human, conceived as citizen, holds inherent rights to self-government. Autonomous citizens, in turn, decide together the parameters of a particular group’s governance. From its inception, however, the supposed freedom of citizenship has been assiduously policed. The ideal collective of autonomous, self-governing citizens invoked by the French “Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen” excluded particular subjects: women, non-property-owning men, and slaves. The nineteenth-century linkage of a group of citizens with a territorially bounded and ethnically homogeneous nation-state resulted (and continues to result) in the spatial policing of non-citizens—including their expulsion. Unfreedom lies at the heart of citizenship. As a space of citizen development, Germany’s literary sphere necessarily incorporates this tension between individual freedom and spatial unfreedom. On the one hand, generous state support of literary production seeks to foster an autonomous, freely judging individual—the theoretical building block of democratic society. On the other hand, the freedom of individual judgment promoted by the literary sphere does not have

equal bearing on the relative freedoms of the state's residents. Notably, a deterritorialized non-citizen within Germany, a refugee, may be encouraged to participate in the citizenship-developing projects of literary production, but does not have the same freedom of movement as does a citizen. In my talk, I examine this tension of citizenship as un/freedom within Germany's literary sphere by looking at state-sponsored projects to incorporate refugees into Germany's literary public. With particular attention to the Berlin-based organization "weiter schreiben," I identify the contradictions that inhere in efforts to promote artistic and individual freedom supported by regimes that are, themselves, participants of international legal regimes that police the movement of non-citizens. I then seek to consider how the literary sphere that "weiter schreiben" creates, may, however, offer glimpses of new forms of freedom in unfreedom via creative production that is diasporic, heteroglossic, and multiscalar in its transnational production and reception.

**JULIA FAISST (U of Regensburg): "Un/Freeing the Desert: Poetic Resistance Towards Immigration Justice"**

Bio:

Julia Faisst is Professor and Acting Chair of American Studies at the University of Regensburg. She received her PhD from Harvard University and her *venia legendi* from the Catholic University of Eichstaett-Ingolstadt. She has held the positions of Max Kade Distinguished Visiting Professor at Notre Dame University, Postdoctoral Researcher at the International Center for the Study of Culture at Giessen University, and Visiting Assistant Professor of English at Wake Forest University. She is author of *Cultures of Emancipation: Photography, Race, and Modern American Literature* (Winter, 2012), the (yet unpublished) manuscript *Precarious Belongings: The Unmaking of the American Home, 1980s-Now*, and co-editor of *Picturing America: Photography and the Sense of Place* (with Kerstin Schmidt, Brill/Rodopi, 2019) as well as David P. Boder's *I Did Not Interview the Dead* (with Alan Rosen and Werner Sollors, Winter, 2012). Her research interests include North American literary and visual culture studies, African American, race and ethnic studies, migration and diaspora studies, gender and intersectionality studies, space and urban studies, economic and environmental humanities, inequality, and class studies.

Abstract:

This talk draws on the "Prevention Through Deterrence" federal border enforcement policy, through which the United States Border Patrol weaponizes nature in order to deter migrants moving north, to analyze the depiction of child migration and forced im/mobility in Javier Zamora's bilingual border poetry collection *Unaccompanied* (2017). I home in on the Sonoran desert as a multiscalar and politicized landscape of dis/empowerment and resistance in order to demonstrate how Zamora re-claims the natural environment usurped by the Border Patrol in his quest for greater immigration justice, equality, and visibility of underage refugees. Using an ecocritical approach to reading Zamora's transcultural border crossing poetry, I argue that the poet recovers the environment and its nonhuman actants as agents of solidarity in the battle for both human rights—the right to migrate—as well as nature's right to not be utilized in terms of deterrence, that is to be made an ally in the attempt to forestall migratory movement. Understanding the precarity of both the human and the natural world as a shared ground, Zamora's poetry hereby draws on feelings of

connection and participation between the animate and the inanimate world, as it seeks out possibilities for more global forms of empowerment across borders as well as natural and infrastructural divisions.

Chair: ALEXANDER GRASER (U of Regensburg)

Bio:

Alexander Graser studied law in Constance, Oxford, and Harvard and passed the state law examinations in Baden-Württemberg. He was then a research fellow at the Max Planck Institute for Foreign and International Social Law from 1997 to 2006. During this time, he completed his doctorate and habilitation at Ludwig Maximilian University in Munich. Afterward, he became Professor of Comparative Public Law and Social Policy at the Hertie School of Governance in Berlin. Since 2010, he has held the Chair of Public Law and Politics, in particular European and International Law and Comparative Law, at the University of Regensburg. His research interests include migration law, amongst other things.

**4:30-5:15pm: Panel C**

**MIKHAIL KRUTIKOV (U of Michigan): "Avrom Sutzkever between Vilna and Moscow"**

Bio:

Mikhail Krutikov is Professor of Slavic and Judaic Studies at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. He is the author of *Yiddish Fiction and the Crisis of Modernity, 1905-1914* (Stanford University Press, 2001), *From Kabbalah to Class Struggle: Expressionism, Marxism and Yiddish Literature in the Life and Work of Meir Wiener* (Stanford University Press, 2011) and *Der Nister's Soviet Years: Yiddish Writer as Witness to the People* (Indiana University Press, 2019). He also co-edited ten collections on Yiddish literature and culture published by the Legenda Press in Oxford. He is a cultural columnist for the *Yiddish Forward*, and a collection of his selected essays *Tsvishn shures* (Between Lines) was published in 2019.

Abstract:

Sutzkever's book "Fun Vilner Geto" is an attempt to combine historical chronicle and personal memoir. Written in Moscow in 1944-45, its text underwent substantial editorial transformations on its way to publication. Drawing on the manuscripts from the archives of the Jewish Antifascist Committee, this talk will explore tensions between different narrative modes and try to reconstruct an "alternative" version of Sutzkever's work.

Chair: PAUL VICKERS (U of Regensburg)

Bio:

Paul Vickers is coordinator of the Leibniz ScienceCampus Europe and America, and manager of the Department for Interdisciplinary and Multiscalar Area Studies (DIMAS) at the University of Regensburg. He came to Regensburg in 2018 as manager of CITAS following a postdoctoral position at the International Graduate Centre for the Study of Culture (GCSC) at the University of Giessen. He has a PhD in East European Studies from the University of Glasgow (2013), where he also received a Master's degree in 2007. He studied at University College London (UCL) between 2002 and 2006, receiving a BA in

Polish and German Studies. During this time, he also studied in Hamburg and Wrocław. He worked as a lecturer at the Precarpathian National University in Ivano-Frankivsk, Ukraine, in 2008 and from 2012 to 2014. He has published articles, and edited volumes and special editions, on memory studies, heritage studies, social history, cultural history, and theatre and television. Most recently, he has co-edited the volume *Heritage under Socialism* with Corinne Geering and Eszter Gantner (Berghahn, 2021). He serves on the editorial board of the blog-journal *Frictions* and has contributed reviews to numerous journals. Paul Vickers is translator of numerous articles and several books in the fields of history, cultural studies and theatre studies from Polish into English. In his spare time, he coaches a children's football (soccer) team in his home town.

## 6:00pm: Author Reading

**RANDAL MAURICE JELKS (U of Kansas): *Letters to Martin: Meditations on Democracy in Black America* (2022)**

### Bio:

Randal Maurice Jelks is Professor of African and African American Studies and American Studies at the University of Kansas. Jelks is an award-winning author, as well as a documentary film producer. His writings have appeared in the Boston Review, the Los Angeles Review of Books as well as national blogs, journals, magazine and newspapers.

Jelks's books are *African Americans in the Furniture City: The Struggle for Civil Rights Struggle in Grand Rapids*, *Benjamin Elijah Mays, Schoolmaster of the Movement: A Biography*, and *Faith and Struggle in the Lives of Four African Americans: Ethel Waters, Mary Lou Williams, Eldridge Cleaver and Muhammad Ali*. Jelks has recently contributed to a collection of essays titled *42 Today: Jack Robinson and His Legacy* edited by Michael Long published by New York University Press. And his latest book is *Letters to Martin: Meditations on Democracy in Black America*.

### Abstract:

"You'll find hope in these pages. " —Jonathan Eig, author of *Ali: A Life* *Letters to Martin* contains twelve meditations on contemporary political struggles for our oxygen-deprived society. Evoking Martin Luther King Jr.'s "Letter from Birmingham Jail," these meditations, written in the form of letters to King, speak specifically to the many public issues we presently confront in the United States—economic inequality, freedom of assembly, police brutality, ongoing social class conflicts, and geopolitics. Award-winning author Randal Maurice Jelks invites readers to reflect on US history by centering on questions of democracy that we must grapple with as a society. Harkening to the era when James Baldwin, Dorothy Day, Reinhold Niebuhr, and Richard Wright used their writing to address the internal and external conflicts that the United States faced, this book is a contemporary revival of the literary tradition of meditative social analysis. These meditations on democracy provide spiritual oxygen to help readers endure the struggles of rebranding, rebuilding, and reforming our democratic institutions so that we can all breathe.

Chairs: RYE BITTL, NAOMI CLIETT (U of Regensburg)

### Bios:

Rye Bittl has a B.A. in American Studies from the University of Regensburg. They are currently writing their Master's Thesis about concepts and negotiations of space and memory in tourist photos taken at Concentration Camp Memorials. Their research



interests include queer studies and history, media studies, and memory studies. They are currently working for the Regensburg European American Forum as a research assistant (Wissenschaftliche Hilfskraft) and want to pursue an academic career in the future.

Naomi is a student at the University of Regensburg. She is currently working on her bachelor's degree in Russian philology and British studies. Her areas of focus in these two fields of study lie in Russian and Slavic cultural studies, Russian linguistics, English linguistics and 16th century - 20th century British literature. Naomi is also working for the Slavistic Institute at the University of Regensburg under the direction of Prof. Dr. Sabine Koller and Caroline Emig. She is currently involved in the research and translation of topics concerning texts written by Jewish and Slavic authors as well as the DFG project headed by Caroline Emig, which focuses on the works of Leyb Kvitko.

## FRIDAY, 20 JAN. 2023—FLOSSENBÜRG CONCENTRATION CAMP MEMORIAL & MUSEUM

**app. 8:00am: departure for Flossenbürg**

**10:00am: Guided Tour**

**12:30pm Discussion**

JULIUS SCHARNETZKY (Researcher Director's Office and PR, Flossenbürg Concentration Camp Memorial and Museum)

**3:00-5:00pm: Panel D**

**BENJAMIN PALOFF (U of Michigan): "Inhuman Values: Labor, Spirit, and Raw Material in Camp Literature"**

Bio:

Benjamin Paloff is Professor of Slavic Languages and Literatures and of Comparative Literature at the University of Michigan, where he also directs the Center for Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies (CREES) and is a faculty affiliate of the Frankel Center for Judaic Studies and the Copernicus Center for Polish Studies. His books include *Lost in the Shadow of the Word (Space, Time, and Freedom in Interwar Eastern Europe)* (Northwestern University Press, 2016), which was named the 2018 Best Book in Literary Studies by the American Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages, and two poetry collections, *And His Orchestra* (2015) and *The Politics* (2011), both published by Carnegie Mellon University Press. His poems have appeared in a wide range of periodicals, including *Boston Review*, *Conduit*, *New American Writing*, *The New Republic*, *The New York Review of Books*, and *The Paris Review*. He has translated about a dozen books and many shorter literary and theoretical texts from Polish, Czech, Russian, and Yiddish, notably works by Dorota Masłowska, Marek Bińczyk, Richard Weiner, and Yuri Lotman, and he has received grants and fellowships from the Michigan Society of Fellows (2007-2010), the Stanford Humanities Center (2013), and the National Endowment for the Arts (2009, 2016), among others.

### Abstract:

Throughout the postwar period, the popular imagination of concentration camps has framed them as spaces of unrelenting dehumanization, as reflected in everything from stories, whether factual or apocryphal, about the industrial uses of human matter, to Giorgio Agamben's celebrated formulations about the reduction of the human to "bare life." Lost in this totalizing view, however, is the variety of ways that people in camps and ghettos valued themselves and each other—as labor, as symbols, and even as raw material—and how this dynamic re-valuation of the human creates situations that are often horrific or comic, but rarely tragic. In this talk, I argue that the competing ways of valuing the human in the camp underpin the symbolic structure of many camp narratives and, with it, the tropes and genres of camp representation. I draw most of my examples from the Yiddish-language stories of Rachmil Bryks, set in the Łódź Ghetto and Auschwitz, and from the stories of Tadeusz Borowski set in Auschwitz and Dachau. In these texts, we find a world not where humans have been abolished, but where their value as human beings has undergone a radical, bewildering reevaluation, one where the very notion of "dehumanization" is called actively into question.

### **TAMARA HEGER (U of Regensburg): "Letters from Liberation: Major Samuel S. Gray, Jr.'s *Dearest Martha*"**

#### Bio:

Tamara Heger is a doctoral candidate and research assistant in American Studies at the University of Regensburg, where she also completed her State Exam in English, History and Social Studies in 2018. She is administrative manager of the Regensburg European American Forum and member of the editorial board of "Frictions," the blogjournal of the Leibniz ScienceCampus "Europe and America in the Modern World." Her research interests include German-American and European-American relations as well as memory and life writing studies, public history and transnational American Studies.

In her dissertation project, she analyzes life writings of US-American soldiers about the liberation of the Flossenbürg Concentration Camp. The project seeks to highlight the multiplicity and fluidity of experiences and memories of Flossenbürg and their biographical relevance for the former soldiers, while also reevaluating genre conventions in the field of life writing and offering critical reconsiderations of the term "Liberation." In 2019, Tamara had the honor of participating in the annual reunion of the 90<sup>th</sup> Division Association in New Orleans, LA., where she met two of the last remaining liberators of Flossenbürg.

#### Abstract:

When Emil Ležak, a Czech (former) inmate and camp writer of the Flossenbürg concentration camp writes "'Jetzt muss ich unterbrechen, die B e f r e i e r sind da!!!!!! Es ist der 23.4.45, 10.50 Uhr!!!!!! Ich habe den bereits gehaltenen Schild ausgehangen: Prisoners happy end – Welcome [...] und jetzt kann ich weiterschreiben"', the liberation of the concentration camp, a paragon of an unfree space, seems to be over and completed as quickly as it began. In reality, it was a much more complicated, confusing and confused – liminal – process. With most of the remaining prisoners found by the US Army too sick to walk away immediately, the concentration camp and its surrounding area are transformed

not only into the headquarter of the regional military government and intelligence, but a hospital, honorary graveyard, DP camp and memorial.

Head of the military government, Major Samuel S. Gray, Jr., leads this process in May 1945 and he writes letters to his wife almost daily. They are part of a two-volume collection titled "Dearest Martha," in which Gray reprints the letters together with excerpts of military reports and retrospective comments for his family in 1999. This presentation will analyze how Gray negotiates the liberation of the Flossenbürg concentration camp as a gradual dissolution and repurposing in his love letters to his wife and notes to his family.

\*Ležak, Emil, qutd. In: Skriebeleit, Jörg: Erinnerungsort Flossenbürg. Göttingen 2009, p. 54.

### **VJERAN PAVLAKOVIĆ (U of Rijeka): "Memorial Spaces and Unfreedoms: Monuments, Museums and the Recreation of Mass Incarceration"**

#### Bio:

Vjeran Pavlaković is an associate professor at the Department of Cultural Studies at the University of Rijeka, Croatia. He received his Ph.D. in History in 2005 from the University of Washington, and has published articles on cultural memory, transitional justice in the former Yugoslavia, and the Spanish Civil War. He is a co-editor of the volume Framing the Nation and Collective Identity in Croatia (Routledge, 2019), which was recently re-issued in Croatian version. He was the lead researcher on the Memoryscapes project as part of Rijeka's European Capital of Culture in 2020 and a co-founder of the Cres Summer School on Transitional Justice and Memory Politics, as well as a researcher on the Rijeka/Fiume in Flux project. Current research includes the transnational muralization of conflict and a history of Dalmatian immigrants in the American Southwest.

#### Abstract:

This talk examines how museums and monuments recreate the sense of mass incarceration, through visual effects, sounds, and other affective strategies. Memorial spaces use darkness, confined space, and authentic historical objects to give contemporary visitors the sense of being restricted in order to have empathy with the victims of authoritarian regimes. Drawing on case studies from the former Yugoslavia, Poland, and elsewhere, this talk seeks to explore how unfreedoms are experienced by visitors of "dark tourist" sites and the challenges facing memorial builders in balancing a dignified exploration of difficult pasts with the urge to create a spectacle. For example, the designers of the Jasenovac Memorial Site effectively created a sense of foreboding and oppression in the museum space but failed to adequately narrate the tragedy of the concentration camp and the regime that built it.

Chair: CAROLINE EMIG, LENA GOTTESWINTER (U of Regensburg)

#### Bios:

Caroline Emig studied Russian philology and economics at the University of Regensburg. Since 2020, she has been working as a research assistant in the DFG research project "Leyb Kvitko or Lev Kvitkó? A Yiddish (children's) Author between the Jewish and Socialist Revolutions." The aim is to examine what contribution Kvitko made to modern Yiddish and later Soviet-Yiddish children's literature. An exhibition and the publication of his children's literature in German translation are in preparation. In addition to her work in

the DFG project, she works as a research assistant for the Center of Commemorative Culture in Regensburg. There she is part of the team in the book project “Remembering the Nazi-‘Euthanasia’” (working title). Various aspects of dealing with Nazi-“Euthanasia” since 1945 are addressed: the reasons for the long-suppressed memory as well as existing commemoration initiatives, ethical connections, and artistic debates. She works as a freelance translator for contemporary witness interviews from Yiddish into German at the Flossenbürg concentration camp memorial site.

Lena Gotteswinter is a PhD candidate and research associate (wissenschaftliche Mitarbeiterin) at the University of Regensburg. She has studied at Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg (FAU) and University College Dublin (UCD) and holds a B.A. in English and American Studies and Book Science as well as an M.A. in North American Studies: Culture and Literature. In 2019, she received the Yale University Post-Graduate Research Fellowship from the Bavarian American Academy to do research at the Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition. Her research interests include hipster cultures, popular music and fashion, African American culture and literature, media studies, and performance studies. In her dissertation project she analyzes 21<sup>st</sup>-century representatives and interpretations of hip in popular music performances with a focus on African American performers.

**app. 5:30pm: departure for Regensburg**

**SATURDAY—VIELBERTH BUILDING, U OF REGENSBURG MAIN CAMPUS (ROOM H 26)**

**9.30am-10.30pm: Panel E**

**FRANK MEHRING (Radboud U Nijmegen): “The ‘Congo Room’: Designing Dining in New York between Vogue Mexico and the Harlem Renaissance”**

Bio:

Frank Mehring is professor of American Studies at Radboud University, Nijmegen/NL. His research focuses on cultural transfer, migration, intermediality in European-American contexts. He received the Rob Kroes Award for his monograph *The Democratic Gap* (2014). His publications include *Sphere Melodies* (2003) on Charles Ives and John Cage, *Soundtrack of Liberation* (2015) on WWII sonic diplomacy, *Sound and Vision: Intermediality and American Music* (2018, with Erik Redling) *The Mexico Diary: Winold Reiss Between Vogue Mexico and the Harlem Renaissance* (2016), *The Politics and Cultures of Liberation* (2018, with Hans Bak and Mathilde Roza), *Islamophobia and Inter/Multimedial Dissensus* (2020, with Elena Furlanetto), and *The Multicultural Modernism of Winold Reiss* (2022). Frank is the co-founder of the EAAS Digital Studies Network and the online journal *AmLit – American Literatures*. Frank organized the first international symposium on Winold Reiss in Berlin and co-curated exhibitions on Winold Reiss, the Marshall Plan, the Marshall Plan Opera La Sterlina Dollarosa and Liberation Songs in New York, Nijmegen and The Hague.

Abstract:

When the German-American painter, designer, and teacher Winold Reiss (1886-1953) returned from a two-month trip to Mexico in 1920, he had an epiphany: he would bring his experience of artistic rejuvenation in rural regions south of the US border and love for color (in an aesthetic and ethnic sense) to public spaces in New York City, particularly dining spaces. His modernist projects in some of the most popular New York restaurants such as the Crillon (between Fifth and Madison Avenues), the Alamac Hotel (at Broadway), or the Longchamps restaurants (spanning all over Manhattan) mark birth of the art of dining as an immersive walk-in Gesamtkunstwerk. Reiss would bring his German expertise in painting and commercial design to American cities to create sequenced spaces with murals, painted mosaics, metal or textile decorations which enabled New Yorkers to have a sensual experience with what Reiss believed was the unfinished business of democracy: to overcome racial boundaries in the DuBoisian sense and enable citizens to recognize the richness of ethnic art - not in museums but in the actual spaces of their everyday lives. In my talk, I want to zoom in on one of the most spectacular dining spaces at the Alamac Hotel nightclub called "the Congo Room" (opened in 1923). This avant-garde roof-top restaurant provided an aesthetic gateway for white audiences to have an aesthetic experience related to modernist fantasies of African American culture. The sensual experience was marked by complete audio-visual immersiveness. In addition to Reiss' design of large-scale murals, doors, tables, chairs, dining cards and lights, the "Congo Room" featured a stage for Paul Spechts's Hotel Alamac Orchestra. The sound of the "Congo Room jazz" was broadcast over radio and recorded by Columbia Records reaching far beyond the actual space on Broadway. To what extent can the "Congo Room" be understood as a precursor to the innovative visual rhetoric Reiss contributed to Alain Locke's Survey Graphic edition *Harlem: Mecca of the New Negro* (1925) and the groundbreaking anthology *The New Negro* (1925)? To what degree does Reiss' modernist vocabulary in public spaces contribute to or undermine the recognition of African American culture during the Harlem Renaissance?

### **NISHANI FRAZIER (U of Kansas): "Dishes to Die For: Black Self-Determination in Slave Cooking"**

#### Bio:

Nishani Frazier is Interim Director of Museum Studies and Associate Professor of American Studies and History at University of Kansas. Prior to University of Kansas, she held positions as Associate Curator of African American History and Archives at Western Reserve Historical Society (WRHS), Assistant to the Director of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Archives at the Martin Luther King Center for Nonviolent Social Change, and personal assistant for Dr. John Hope Franklin, before and during his tenure as chair of President Bill Clinton's advisory board on "One America".

Her research interests include 1960s freedom movements, oral history, food studies, digital humanities, and black economic development. Nishani's book publication, *Harambee City: The Congress of Racial Equality in Cleveland and the Rise of Black Power Populism*, was released with an accompanying website also titled *Harambee City*.

#### Abstract:

This talk is extracted from a book in progress titled: *Cooking with Black Nationalism*, which examines cultural forms of resistance via notions of nation-state/peoplehood and food. The full manuscript will study over time Black American relationship to food as a tool of

resistance that transforms in reaction to societal changes. This talk contends that black nationalism and its relationship to food is as much a celebration of organic epistemology and spirit as it is a response to white supremacy. It further suggests that a study of other expressions of black self-help (i.e. black farming and/or other liberatory practices) opens new discussions about black nationalism and its relationship to food and food practices that form the foundation of black eating today. From Chapter One of *Cooking with Black Nationalism*, this talk examines proto-type forms of black nationalism and also outlines an essential key to reframing the foundations of black nationalist thought. Food is not just a political exercise but also centrally tied to who we are, how we think, what we want, and the way we craft our destiny in the now.

Chair: ANNE BRÜSKE (U of Regensburg)

Bio:

Anne Brüske joined the University of Regensburg as professor for “Spatial Dimensions of Cultural Processes” at the new-founded Department for Interdisciplinary and Multiscalar Area Studies in 2022. Before coming to Regensburg, she directed the research group “From the Caribbean to North America and Back. Transculturation Processes in Fiction, Popular Culture, and New Media” (Heidelberg Initiative of Excellence, 2010-2017). Her research and teaching focus primarily on the borderlands and boundary areas of academic disciplines and cultural spaces. Her fields of interest include diaspora cultures, popular media and memory, processes of de- and reterritorialization, and the medial production of space. She has a special interest in Caribbean and Latin American Studies as well as in transregional entanglements between the Americas and Eastern Europe.

**11:00am-12:00: Panel F**

**ANNA IVANOVA (Graduate School for East and Southeast European Studies, Regensburg; formerly U of Kharkiv): “Doing Critical Social Science Research under the Conditions of War: Levels of Unfreedom”**

Bio:

Anna Ivanova is a Doctorate Student working on the dissertation “Decommunization in the Urban Space of Ukraine: Discourses, Identities, Symbols.” In 2015 she got a Bachelor's Degree from the V. N. Karazin Kharkiv National University, Kharkiv (Ukraine), presenting her Bachelor's thesis on the “Ukrainian Discourse of Unity: Design and Characteristics.” Later, she completed a Master's Degree in Sociology at the V. N. Karazin Kharkiv National University, with a Master's thesis titled “Radicalization of the Ukrainian Political Discourse in 2012-2015”. In 2018 she got her Master's Degree in Political Science at the Goethe University, Frankfurt am Main, completing a Master's thesis, “Objective and Subjective Democracy: A Comparison of Different Regime Types.”

Before the war in Ukraine, Anna was a Doctorate Student at the Faculty of Political Sociology at V. N. Karazin Kharkiv National University. Since May 2022, she has been a Visiting Fellow at the Graduate School for East and Southeast European Studies at the University of Regensburg.

Anna's research interests include critical discourse analysis, urban studies, postcolonial and critical theories, and research on ideology and capitalism.

Abstract:

The talk will approach the personal experience of doing social science research under the conditions of the war in Ukraine. It will discuss the levels of unfreedom in their connection to personal, political and academic space, which limit the possibility of doing the research. I will start with a rather existential question of making sense of social science in general when it cannot realize one of its primary functions — to impact the social world. Then, I'll move on to a rather practical question of im/possibility of prioritizing research activities over all other aspects of life. To end up with, I'll raise an ethical question of the im/possibility of working on a specific research topic critical to certain aspects of Ukrainian society. Discussing these three levels, I will try to demonstrate just a few aspects of unfreedom that a social scientist can encounter doing research in the context of war.

**ELIZAVETA DOMNIKOVA (European University at Saint Petersburg/U of Regensburg): “A Young Scholar's Reflections on What It Is Like to be Part of a State University in an Authoritarian State”**

Bio:

Elizaveta Domnikova was born in Malakhovka a small dacha settlement on the outskirts of Moscow. In 2019 she completed her bachelor's degree at the Institute of Asian and African Studies of Moscow State University. In the same year, her first article (on Ilya Ehrenburg's novel *The Stormy life of Lasik Roitschwantz*) was published in *Tirosh. Jewish, Slavic & Oriental Studies*. In 2021 she completed her master's degree at the philology department of Saint Petersburg State University. Since September 2021 Elizaveta Domnikova has been part of an additional vocational education program “Literary translation from Yiddish” at the European University of Saint Petersburg where she teaches courses on Yiddish and Ashkenazic Hebrew. Since Winter 2022, she has been working on the publication of Isroel Rabon's “Baluty” and “Sketches of 1939”. This project includes translation from Yiddish into Russian and compilation of detailed commentary.

In the first quarter of 2024, a small collection of Yiddish proverbs with an introduction of her own will be published.

Abstract:

In my speech, I will raise the issue of severe underfunding of state universities which leads to extremely low study allowances (1,572 rubles a month in 2019-2021, which is approx. 22 euros) and low salaries, which cause a constant shortage of teaching staff and make fertile ground for bribery and corruption. I will also speak on the problem of censored and forced topics, as well as general restrictions on creative freedom that my groupmates and I faced during the two-year master's course in SPbU. Last but not least I will focus on the lack of support for students who are vocal about their dissatisfaction with government policies (i.e. taking part in an inconsistent rally and/or expressing dissent both off- and online).

Chair: URSULA REGENER (U of Regensburg)

Bio:

Born in Cologne in 1961, course of studies (German philology, philosophy, musicology) and doctorate in Münster, working position at the University of Augsburg from 1989-2004. Habilitation 1999. 2001-2004 Heisenberg-scholarship holder. Since October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2004, full

professorship and chair of German philology/modern German literature at the University of Regensburg, 2005-2009 member of the Jean Paul-Preis jury, 2006-2010 president of the Eichendorff-Gesellschaft e.V., 2010-2015 academic dean of the faculty of Linguistics, Literary, and Cultural studies, 2012-2016 member of the "AG Studium und Lehre," 2017-2020 the university's women's representative, 2020- vice president of internationalization and diversity.

Publications about Johann Christian Günther, Lessing, Schiller, Goethe, Brentano, Eichendorff, Schenk, Frisch, media theory, cultural studies, cognitive science, editor of diverse volumes of the historical-critical Eichendorff edition, co-editor of the annual book of the Eichendorff-Gesellschaft "Aurora" as well as the "Regensburger Beiträge zur Deutschen Sprach- und Literaturwissenschaft."

Exhibition concept: "Eichendorff wiederfinden" at the Frankfurter Goethehaus, 2006; "FederFührend. Eduard von Schenk und die Romantik in Bayern" at the State Library Regensburg, 2013.

Theater work at the chair: Germanistentheater, Literarische Performanz, UR Stage Club, UR Musical.

## 12:30-1:30pm: Reading & Discussion

### **HEINRICH KIRSCHBAUM (U of Freiburg): Reading, Discussion: *Revolution der Geduld: Eine belarussische Bricolage***

#### Bio:

Heinrich Kirschbaum is a Slavist, essayist, and translator. He studied at the University of Regensburg and received his doctorate there on the German substrate in Osip Mandelstam's work. From 2007 to 2011, he worked as a research assistant at the University of Passau. From 2011 to 2012, he was a postdoctoral fellow at the Alexandert-von-Humboldt-Foundation at the University of Breslau. From 2013 to 2017, Heinrich Kirschbaum had a junior professorship for West Slavic Literatures and Cultures at the Humboldt University of Berlin. There he habilitated with the monography about Polish-Russian (anti)imperial tensions in the Romantic period. From 2017 to 2019, he held the position of an assistant professor for Slavic and General Literary Studies at the University of Basel. Since 2019, he has held the professorship of Slavic Literary and Cultural Studies at the University of Freiburg. Heinrich Kirschbaum is subject editor (Slavic Studies) of the journal "POETICA." His most important publications include:

- „Valgally beloe vino..." Nemeckaja tema v poëzii O. Mandel'stama. [„Walhallas weißer Wein..." Das deutsche Thema in der Dichtung Osip Mandel'stams]. Moskau, 2010.
- Im intertextuellen Schlangennest. Adam Mickiewicz und polnisch-russisches (anti-) imperiales Schreiben. Frankfurt am Main et al., 2016.
- Revolution der Geduld. Eine belarussische Bricolage. Matthes und Seitz Berlin, 2022.

#### Abstract:

Persistently and patiently, the Belarusian revolution is pushing forward something irreversible: a self-assembly, an anarchic subjectivation from below.

In the summer of 2020, people in Belarus took to the streets to fight for democracy and freedom. The talk was quickly of a revolution, but if a revolution consists of nothing being



the same afterwards, then the revolution in Belarus has not yet taken place. Or it has, but then in a completely different way: as a permanent revolution, a revolution of patience. With philological flair and cultural-historical insight, Heinrich Kirschbaum does not read the Belarusian protests as a singular event but discovers in them the persistence of the human will for change and self-organization: the silent, persistent marches through the backyards, the people's willingness to help each other or the diaspora that is forming in European cities bear witness to this. In twenty-two reflections dealing with language and history, poetry and, not least, one's own consternation, this "Belarusian bricolage" traces the emergence of a civil society beyond sanctioned power structures.

Chair: TATIANA KLEPIKOVA (U of Regensburg)

**Bio:**

Tatiana Klepikova is a Freigeist Fellow of the Volkswagen Foundation at the University of Regensburg, where she leads the research group on queer literary cultures under socialism. She is editor and translator of *Contemporary Queer Plays by Russian Playwrights* (Bloomsbury, 2021) and co-editor of *Outside the "Comfort Zone": Private and Public Spheres in Late Socialist Europe* (De Gruyter, 2020, with Lukas Raabe). Her work focuses on queer drama and performance and cultures of non-normative genders and sexualities in Eastern Europe.

**1:30-2:00pm: Coffee & Concluding Discussion**

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**Contact:** [un.free@ur.de](mailto:un.free@ur.de)

**Workshop Organization:** Birgit Hebel-Bauridl, Sabine Koller

**Workshop Registration:** via email to [un.free@ur.de](mailto:un.free@ur.de) (by 20 Dec. 2022 for Friday / Flossenbürg; by 09 Jan. 2023 for Thursday IOS / Saturday UR; for registration details, pls. visit our website).

**Workshop Website:** <https://www.europeamerica.de/news-and-events/workshop-unfree-spaces-in-the-modern-world.html>

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